

92. (Amended) The coated optical fiber of claim 91, wherein said primary coating is obtained by curing a composition that is liquid at 25° C.

94. (Amended) A method of preparing a coated optical fiber for splicing, the coated optical fiber being a coated optical fiber according to claim 73, comprising the steps of:

stripping the primary coating away from a portion of the optical fiber at a temperature in at least a portion of the temperature range from about 25° to about 125° C. by cutting with a blade into the primary coating, then having the blade exert a force on the primary coating in a direction parallel to the optical fiber to force the primary coating away from the portion of the optical fiber, and optionally wiping the portion of optical fiber from which <sup>the</sup> primary coating has been forced away with an alcohol laden piece of cloth or paper, such that the stripped portion exhibits little or no residue of the primary coating.

95. (Amended) A method of splicing coated optical fibers comprising, preparing two optical fibers for splicing according to the method of claim 94;

aligning the stripped portions of the prepared optical fibers; and

joining the stripped portions of the prepared optical fibers.

Please cancel claim 97 without prejudice or disclaimer to its reintroduction, for instance in a future application.

#### REMARKS

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 73-96 and 98 will be pending. Reconsideration of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 74, 75, 84, 92, 95, and 96 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The claims have been revised bearing in mind the Examiner's concerns and it is respectfully submitted that all claims, as amended, are in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112.

Claims 94-96 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,373,578 to Parker *et al.* Applicants note that claims 94-96, as amended, are directly or